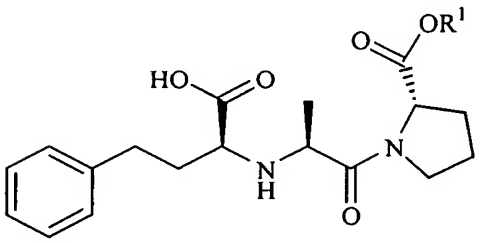
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A proline ester represented by the following formula (I):



(I)

wherein R^1 represents a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy-lower alkyl group, or a lower alkoxy-lower alkoxy-lower alkyl group or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The proline ester as described in claim 1, which is selected from the group consisting of 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 2-hydroxyethyl ester, 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 3-hydroxypropyl ester, 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 4-hydroxybutyl ester, 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 2-(2-methoxyethoxy)ethyl ester, and 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 2-methoxyethyl ester, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A drug comprising a proline ester as recited in claim 1 [[or 2]] or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A percutaneous preparation comprising a proline ester as recited in claim 1 [[or 2]] or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 5 (Original): The percutaneous preparation as described in claim 4, which is a patch.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The percutaneous preparation as described in claim 4 [[4 or 5]], which comprises one or more percutaneous absorption enhancers selected from the group consisting of a fatty acid ester and a non-ionic surfactant.

Claim 7 (Original): The percutaneous preparation as described in claim 6, wherein the percutaneous absorption enhancer is selected from the group consisting of isopropyl myristate, lauromacrogol, lauric acid diethanolamide, glyceryl monocaprylate, glyceryl monolaurate, sorbitan monocaprylate, and polyoxyethylene sorbitan monooleate.

Claims 8-10 (Cancelled)

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A method for treating a pathological condition affected or induced by activation of an ACE~~, characterized in that the method comprises~~ comprising:

administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a proline ester ~~as recited in claim 1 or 2~~ of claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The method ~~for treating as described in~~ of claim 11, wherein administration is performed percutaneously.

Claim 13 (New): The method of Claim 11, wherein the pathological condition is selected from the group consisting of hypertension, a cardiac disease, nephritis, and apoplexy.

Claim 14 (New): The method of Claim 11, wherein the pathological condition is cardiac hypertrophy, cardiac failure, or myocardial infarct.